



A STUDY ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR NURSES IN A MULTISPECIALTY HOSPITAL

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ABSTRACT

Health care organizations are solely dependent on the human resources. Development programmes go a long way in providing job satisfaction and staff retention. The study aimed to assess the staff development programmes provided to the nursing staff. A sample size of 30 nurses working in the private wards of a selected hospital was considered for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to gather data. Data was presented in the form of Frequency and Percentage scores. The data revealed that Career planning, job enlargement and stress reduction programmes need to be focused.

KEY WORDS: Staff Development Programmes, Career Planning.

INTRODUCTION

The success of a healthcare organization is extremely dependent on its human resources. Although there are many other factors that play a key role, a hospital must have efficient employees in order to stay competitive. Efficient patient care is the result, not only of modern equipment and drugs, but also of the workforce and a group of well-motivated nursing personnel. Hospitals need to invest in ongoing nursing staff development programmes in order to retain employees and be successful in a long run.

Employee development programs are activities that mobilize, motivate and allow people to develop and reach fulfilment in and through work, aimed at the achievement of hospitals goals. Employee development programs are of critical importance in the efficient and effective operation of organizations. (Seshu Babu, 1994) Employee development programme is a process in which the employees of an organization are continuously helped in a planned way to acquire or sharpen capabilities required to perform various tasks and functions associated with their present or future expected roles, to develop their general enabling capabilities as individuals so that they are able to discover and exploit their own inner potentials for their own and/or organizational development purposes and to develop an organizational culture where superior –subordinate relationship, teamwork and collaboration among different sub units are strong and contribute to the organizational health, dynamism and pride of employees. (Rao .T. V, 1999) The extent to which hospital/healthcare institution succeeds in achieving its goals depends to a large extent on its employee development programs. Healthcare institutions today are required to perceive employee development programs as an instrument to orchestrate its growth by creating a work environment and culture conducive to achievement of excellence. (Mittra, 1999) Job rotation is a practice that allows an employee to move laterally between divisions or units within an organization, thereby allowing the employee on-the-job training and experience in a variety of areas, without a change in rank or employment status. (Morrison & Hock, 1998). Job rotation and cross training are important and effective strategies to facilitate leadership development. By utilizing a formalized career development program, organizations are in a better position to identify employees with management talent and provide opportunities for the employees to develop their skills. Once a prospective candidate is identified, the employee's program may then be tailored to meet the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for future positions. (Noe, et al, 2000)

A compiled a review of 23 studies of nurse retention and quality of work life was reported from across Canada. The findings were showed factors important in retention were: 1) work environment issues such as staffing, workload structure, non-nursing functions, scheduling, staff orientations, internships, and preceptor ships; 2) education in the use of technology, clinical and technical expertise, career opportunities; and 3) compensation in pay and benefits. (The Canadian Nurses Association/Canadian Hospital Association, 1990)

Learning and career development opportunities are two important factors that would influence the retention of new nurses. Mentors play a vital role in providing these opportunities. Moreover, mentors can facilitate professional socialization of the new nurses in nursing; facilitate their transition into the workplace and social culture of the organization; and make them feel welcome in peer groups, with co-workers and the organization. In addition, mentoring can promote the transfer of knowledge and values that support a hospital's mission. Therefore, a mentoring program is seen as a useful approach in improving the retention of new nurses. (Proenca and Shewchuck, 2001) Thus arises a need to assess the staff development programmes for employees in organizations. This will aid the organizations in developing strategies to develop the workforce and reduce turnover.

OBJECTIVES

To assess the staff development programmes organized for nurses in a selected hospital.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research approach adopted in the study was a descriptive. A sample size of 30 nurses working in the private wards was selected using simple random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data regarding development programmes. Nursing staff with a minimum of 1 year of experience were included in the study. The collected data was analyzed in terms of frequency and percentage scores and was presented in the form of tables.

RESULTS

The results are shown below in the form of tables.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the nurses.

n=30

Age in Years	Years of experience				
	*F	%	Category	*F	%
20-30	26	87	1- 2	18	60
31-40	3	10	3-4	8	27
41 and above	1	3	4-6	4	13

Table 1 shows that majority (87%) of the nurses were in the age group 20 – 30 years. Majority (60%) of the nurses were having 1-2 years work experience.

Table 2: Staff Development Programmes provided for nursing staff.

COMPONENTS	YES (%)	NO (%)
On the job training	94.3	5.7
Job rotation	85.7	14.3
Job enlargement	49.7	50.3
Job enrichment	62.3	37.7
Career planning	40	60
Mentoring system	85.7	14.3
Workshops & conferences	84.3	15.7
Performance appraisal	55.7	44.3
Stress relief programmes	30	70
Continuing Medical Education (CME)	73.3	26.7

Table 2 shows that majority of the nurses agreed that they have the following development programs; on the job training (94.3%), job rotation (85.7%), job enrichment (62.3%) mentoring system (85.7%), workshops & conferences (84.3%), performance appraisal (55.7%), Continuing Medical Education (73.3%). But scores were lesser for job enlargement (49.7%), career planning (40%) and stress-relief programmes (30%).

DISCUSSION

The study shows that most of the development programmes are provided to the nursing staff by the hospital, few programmes such as job enlargement, career planning and stress-relief programmes need to be provided.

Various organizational interventions, such as training, job enlargement, job enrichment and participation in improvement groups, could promote the extent to which employees feel confident. Job enlargement involves increasing the breadth of activities employees are involved in, such as combining tasks previously accomplished by two people. Job enlargement allows opportunities for additional skill development by increasing the range of technical tasks an employee is responsible for completing. (Parker. L.J, 1999) This implies that job enlargement is one among the programmes which lead to employee skill development.

Career development programs have a positive influence on employee job satisfaction, and subsequently improve performance and reduce turnover. Most often, they cite stagnation and burnout as causal factors of job dissatisfaction resulting in poor performance and turnover. (Johnson, Reiser, 2006). Thus one of the measures for retention of nursing staff is through career development programmes.

Nursing has been identified as an occupation that has high levels of stress. (Xianyu Y, Lambert VA. 2006). As the nurses work in stressful conditions in every part of the healthcare setup, stress relief programmes will give them comfort and make them productive in workplace.

CONCLUSION

Staff development programs play a significant role in the satisfaction of nursing staff, which in turn leads to nurse's retention. When employees receive relevant and valuable development programmes, they are generally happier in their jobs. When that programme is carried to the next level and becomes overall development, employees tend to feel even more valued by their employers. Thus it should be the target of growing organizations to focus on staff development programmes, to reduce turnover and increase work efficiency.

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